

Ben Playden

Feb 9. 1852

My dear Friend

When I look at the date
of thy last very welcome letter I feel
conscious of having laid myself open to
the charge of ingratitude & negligence
in having suffered it to remain so
long unanswered - but when I think
how I have been circumstanced
I believe thou wilt judge me ~~unavoidably~~ ^{unavoidably}.
First then, asking thee to excuse a
little personal detail - I must ~~say~~
say that after a little visit here in
the summer I proceeded in July to
London, where I spent the very great
pleasure of ^{meeting} Mrs Chapman & her
party, the ~~our~~ intercourse was much
more brief than my inclination to
have led me to desire. I also attended
the last sitting of the Peace Congress
& the Peace Society - after spending

some time with my relatives in the
neighbourhood of London & of course
visiting the Great Exhibition, I made
some more distant visits, including
Bristol where I had the treat of be-
-coming personally acquainted with
the Estlins - who are indeed - the
father & the daughter an admirable
couple & truly devoted to the cause of
true Anti-Slavery. Subsequently, I
paid a visit to an Uncle's Aunt in
Suffolk & on returning to my relatives
near London, found my very dear
cousin who is always in delicate health
- but just commencing with a severe
attack of Bronchitis - she was so ill &
so utterly prostrated by it, that I could
not leave her & thus my stay was in
a Southern climate, in an unusually
hot season was extended much beyond
what I had purposed & as the result
proved beyond what my strength w^d
bear. I became very unwell before
leaving & therefore resolved, instead of
returning home, to resort to this

"Fountain of health" to be sent in despair.
The process has proved a much more
tedious one than I looked for, & my
constitution had been much more
weakened than I was at all aware of
when I came. Now however I am so very
much better as to justify the hopes of
having my dear wife's permission to return
home - where I truly long to be - in the
course of two or three weeks. I often
feel very, very, trying to be so useless a being
& to have it only in my power to react
of other people's claims in the great cause
of humanity, rather than looking on
helping hand - however feeble - of my
own. Be assured, however, that I do
love to hear what is going on & of the
success which attends the efforts of the
labourers in the vast work. The "Liberator"
comes regularly to tell me of
the progress made on your side & kind
friends supply me with intelligence
of the movements made in its aid,
in this. The Estlin's are working hard
& Mrs Chapman's advocacy in London
has, I have no doubt, interested many
& done much to open the eyes of others

to the degree of confidence that ought
to be placed in the honest & unimpaired
Still its influence is surprisingly great
or rather the not feeling that it is the
representative of A. S. ~~the~~ sentiment in
this country still retains a powerful
basis on the minds of such as entered
into the cause of West Indian Emancipa-
-tion but who have not knowledge
sufficient of the American question
to save them from being misled the
clashes of their misrepresentations.
In my own land I am not sure that
I could name one individual who
opposes them. In Scotland they have
more knowledge & a strong feeling even
in favour of the true Abolitionists - there
is also a strong one in the minds of
some against them. But in England
I fear whether it will be possible to
form much of an organization on the
right side - but I am very imperfectly
acquainted with facts & hopes, I may
be mistaken.

It is long since I heard any thing of Mrs.
Chapman - she kindly wrote me in

after they reached Paris - but she omitted
 to give their address - & I really have
 no little to say that could possibly bear
 any interest that I never made an
 effort to obtain it. I trust I shall be
 - come more acquainted personally
 when they return to this country - I was
 much disappointed that Mrs. F. had
 not left the country before I reached
 London - I am pleased to hear that
 she is now returned much improved
 in health. I heard of Charles Spear
 when in the South but did not see him
 & but one word home I heard of him
 since - whether he is in the country or no
 I cannot tell. I was delighted to
 meet Geo. Thompson & to hear from
 him so many little details about you
 all, which no letters could convey.
 Tell dear Wendell & Ann they are as
 fondly cherished in my remembrance
 as ever & that I have but long wished
 the hope of one day seeing them again
 in this country - otherwise, we shall
 meet no more. I believe in this world -
 I can strike two not & have the infer-
 - nals of age too surely creeping on

for me to have the remotest idea of
crossing the Atlantic. I wish very much
to see them - I have been hoping to
hear from Wendell tho' I know it
is selfish to wish him to employ his
valuable time in writing to one who
can render him no assistance in
the high work, which he so ably &
devotedly advocates. (He w^d receive a
letter from me enclosing one from A.
Nichols in the summer.) I read his
speech on Hays with a career in America
with perfect delight & have sent
the paper in visits to several of my
friends in different parts of the
country, to let them see how meanly
he has shirked the question of liberty
in your land - proving himself to be
not a lover of freedom for all, but for
his own country merely. Sincere patri-
-otism is as w^d says, essentially
selfish. I have been thinking whether
it w^d not be worth while to have
the speech printed & circulated on
this side the Atlantic. My Liberator
which contains it - was for Jan^y 2.

with the pretty well worn ~~up~~ ^{out} with its
travels. May I ask thee to send me
another copy? for I must see he writes
- me it. Please also to ask W. L. G.
no longer to send the Liberator to Dr.
Inglewood; his hands are so full, they
are only needed; - that containing W. L.
speeches I never could find - I should
have taken no pains of it.

Oh! we treat I had when in London
was to dine & spend an eve. with
Mazzini - at Mansfield Hill - where
W. L. & many others on your side will
remember thinking so pleasant a day
- both eve. in 1840. Mazzini is
indeed a noble, striking looking person.
Such an eye I never saw in any other
person - so full of fire - so penetrating
& so bold. I cannot think he
would have asked as K. South has
regarding American Slavery.

I share your Bazaar, equalled your
anticipations - the Lib. gives no fewer
particulars than usual respecting it.
I wonder whether the knitted counter-
pane, which was sent in the Columbus

Box, South?

See who is labouring away as indefatigably as ever - he must have been a remarkable physical strength to go thro' what he does. I should like to see him when you see him. And give my kindest love to Wm & his wife & children - I hope Garrison's health is better - I want to thank him for my cups & table letter rec'd thro' C. J. I fear I have nothing interesting to say on Ish² wife & thank him for it myself. My kind remembrance to the friends generally who know me. I want much to send a small volume to Wendell, if I only knew how. I suppose it is too late a great deal to send it thro' the post. How is thy health at present? would not a voyage be of service? I had the no serious thought of joining thy sister this next summer & being a little of England & Scotland, giving many who have long known thee by name & who loved thee for thy works sake, the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted? Think of it.

What will be the issue of the mono-
 -quents & common sense in the Contract?
 The year opened upon us ominously -
 Certain it is, that every despotic
 Government must be revolutionized
 in one way or another - Time doubly
 is it to be lamented that their
 rulers will not heed the progress of
 public opinion & do that peacefully
 & spontaneously, which otherwise
 will doubtless be effected by the
 sword. We hear much of the
 probability of a French invasion &
 the necessity for being prepared -
 & it is grievous to find how very
 few there are who acknowledge
 the Christian principle of peace.
 My heart is often sickened here
 when I listen to the conversation
 at the public table & hear minis-
 -ters of religion advocating the

breathemien sentiment that
our Gov^t should be fully prepared
for war & every able bodied man
hold himself in readiness to be
called out. I feel inclined to ask
them sometimes whether they believe
in a God or whether they think the
world is ruled by chance. Surely
their confidence is in the worst
whatsoever allegiance they may
swear to lead to the Supreme
Governor of the Universe. Some
sometimes asked these poor ad-
-vokates of bloodshed, whether
the safety of the nation is to be
put in competition with the worth
of one innocent soul & how few
they think we have the right
to plunge hundreds & thousands

unprepared into Eternity. This
sometimes induces a pause but
they soon fall back to the doctrine
of expecting that war cannot
be done without in the present
state of the world.

But I must arrest my pen -
which I am sorry to think has
told thee so little that is worth
the trouble of reading - it
may however most truly assure
thee of the continued esteem
of thy affec^d Friend

Thy^{te} Friend

Please not to forget Wendell's
crotchets -

